

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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TAGS: CGEN

SUBJECT: PRESS BRIEFING TRANSCRIPT ON PETERSON AND CRAWFORD

1. UNCORRECTED PORTION OF JUNE 13 PRESS BRIEFING TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS:

2. Q. TOM, DO YOU HAVE ANY RECENT COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SOVIETS IN THE CASE OF F. J. CRAWFORD, THE INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER EXECUTIVE WHO WAS PICKED UP?

A. OUR EMBASSY IN MOSCOW REPORTED THAT ABOUT 1900 MOSCOW TIME ON JUNE 12, AN AUTOMOBILE DRIVEN BY MR. F. J. CRAWFORD, MOSCOW REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER COMPANY WAS STOPPED BY THE SOVIET MILITIA--THAT IS, THE SOVIET POLICE--IN DOWNTOWN MOSCOW, AND HE WAS FORCIBLY TAKEN AWAY BY THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES.
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A U.S. EMBASSY SECRETARY WHO WAS A PASSENGER IN THE CAR, MS. VIRGINIA OLBRISH, WAS FORCIBLY KEPT IN THE CAR AS MR. CRAWFORD WAS LED AWAY, BUT SHE WAS SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED AND RETURNED TO THE EMBASSY.

OUR EMBASSY IMMEDIATELY RAISED THE MATTER WITH THE MILITIA, AND WITH THE SOVIET MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS, GEORGE VEST, RAISED THE MATTER YESTERDAY AFTERNOON WHEN HE MET

WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN.

AFTER PERSISTENT ATTEMPTS BY OUR EMBASSY THROUGH THE NIGHT OF JUNE 12 AND THE MORNING OF JUNE 13 TO DETERMINE MR. CRAWFORD'S WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS, OUR EMBASSY WAS INFORMED ON JUNE 13 BY THE SOVIET MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS THAT MR. CRAWFORD HAD BEEN ARRESTED FOR VIOLATING ARTICLE 78 OF THE SOVIET CRIMINAL CODE. AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT THAT PARTICULAR CHARGE INVOLVES ILLEGAL CURRENCY DEALINGS.

THE MINISTRY OFFERED TO ARRANGE CONSULAR ACCESS TO MR. CRAWFORD AND THE CONSULAR OFFICER HAD AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE HIM TODAY.

THAT IS HOW THE MATTER STANDS AS OF NOW.

Q. WHERE IS HE? DO YOU KNOW HIS WHEREABOUTS?

A. I DON'T HAVE THAT INFORMATION FOR YOU, BUT SINCE WE ARE GOING TO SEE HIM, WE OBVIOUSLY KNOW WHERE HE IS. I CAN TAKE THAT QUESTION.

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Q. TOM, WHEN YOU SAID MR. VEST SAW DOBRYNIN WAS IT FOR THAT PURPOSE SOLELY? IS THAT THE REASON FOR THE MEETING?

A. I KNOW ONLY THAT THIS MATTER WAS RAISED DURING THE MEETING. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT, IF ANY, OTHER SUBJECTS WERE RAISED.

Q. DO YOU SEE ANY PATTERN? DO YOU SEE THIS AS PART OF A LARGER PICTURE THAT HAS ANY SENSE IN THE LARGER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION?

A. WE HAVE NOTED THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN IZVESTIYA ARTICLE, WHICH MAKES CERTAIN CHARGES WHICH APPEAR TO LINK THE CASES.

Q. WHICH CASES?

A. THE CASES OF THE TWO SOVIET SPIES ARRESTED IN NEW JERSEY; AND THE CRAWFORD CASE IN THE SOVIET UNION.

Q. BUT WE WERE INTERESTED IN THE PETERSON CASE.

A. THE PETERSON ARTICLE, THE PETERSON STORY--YOU WILL JUST HAVE TO DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS. I DON'T SEE ANY PARTICULAR--I AM NOT GOING TO DRAW ANY LINKAGE.

Q. I ASKED YOU ABOUT THE CRAWFORD CASE, WHICH SEEMS TO BE OF A DIFFERENT QUALITY--WHICH WOULD SEEM TO LAY OPEN ALMOST ANY FOREIGNER IN MOSCOW, PARTICULARLY AN AMERICAN, TO

CHARGES UNDER THE VERY COMPLEX AND LARGELY UNKNOWN SOVIET CURRENCY REGULATIONS. DO YOU SEE ANY CONNECTION IN THIS CASE WITH THE LARGER CURRENT STRAINS?

A. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO MAKE THAT LINKAGE, NO.

Q. TOM, CAN I GO BACK TO THE QUESTION ON THE "IZVESTIYA" ARTICLE?

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IT SEEMS TO SAY THAT THE U.S. BROKE SOME KIND OF AN AGREEMENT NOT TO PUBLICIZE THE ARRESTS OF SPIES OR ALLEGED SPIES, AND THAT THE U.S. HAD REQUESTED THAT THE PETERSON CASE NOT BE PUBLICIZED, AND THEN THIS CASE IN NEW JERSEY CAME UP.

AND THEN THE SECOND QUESTION I HAVE ABOUT THIS ARTICLE IS: A PERSON SEEMS TO HAVE LOST HIS OR HER LIFE IN REGARD TO MISS PETERSON'S ACTIVITIES. COULD YOU ADDRESS THOSE TWO?

A. FIRST OF ALL, LET ME SAY AS TO AGREEMENTS I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY "GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT" OR "STANDARD PRACTICE" YOU KNOW, OVER THE YEARS, SOME OF THESE CASES CROP UP IN THE PUBLIC AND SOME DON'T.

Q. WELL, DID THE EMBASSY'S REQUEST ON THE PARTICULAR CASE OF MISS PETERSON--

A. I REALLY DON'T KNOW, JUAN, AND I AM NOT REALLY IN A POSITION TO SAY WHAT WE MAY, OR MAY NOT HAVE REQUESTED.

Q. TO GO BACK TO THE FACTS OF THE CASE--

A. --AND IF I COULD ANSWER, OR "NOT ANSWER" JUAN'S OTHER QUESTION, I AM NOT GOING TO HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT ALLEGATIONS OF INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.

Q. TO GO BACK TO THE FACTS OF THE INSTANT CASE, THE CRAWFORD CASE, YOU SAY THE EMBASSY SECRETARY WAS FORCIBLY KEPT IN THE CAR?

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A. THAT'S CORRECT.

Q. O.K., THERE ARE LOTS OF POSSIBILITIES THERE. WAS SHE TRYING TO GO WITH HIM?

WAS SHE TRYING TO LEAVE?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN "FORCIBLY KEPT?"

DID SHE WANT TO ACCOMPANY MR. CRAWFORD TO MAKE SURE EVERY-
THING WAS ALL RIGHT, OR WAS SHE JUST TRYING TO GO HER OWN
WAY? WHAT DO YOU MEAN SHE WAS FORCIBLY--

THEY WOULDN'T LET HER GET OUT AND LIGHT A CIGARETTE? I
DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS.

A. I GATHER WHAT IT MEANS IS THAT SHE WAS NOT AT LIBERTY
TO LEAVE THE CAR.

Q. TOM, DO YOU HAVE ANY EXPLANATION FROM THE SOVIET
MILITIA, OR FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AS TO WHY THEY
ARRESTED THEM ON THE STREET FOR THIS KIND OF CASE?

A. NO, NOT THAT I AM AWARE OF.

Q. DO YOU THINK THAT THAT KIND OF PUBLIC ARREST WAS DONE
WITH AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE?

A. I CAN'T SPEAK TO THE MOTIVES OF THE SOVIET MILITIA--
MY GOODNESS.

Q. ISN'T IT KIND OF EXTRAORDINARY THAT THE MAN CHARGED
WITH AN ECONOMIC CRIME IS ARRESTED BY STOPPING HIS CAR ON
THE STREET?

A. LET ME SAY THAT WE HAVE PROTESTED. WE HAVE PRESENTED A
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NOTE PROTESTING THE BEHAVIOR OF THE ARRESTING AUTHORITIES.
THAT NOTE WAS PRESENTED AT A MEETING WITH THE OFFICIALS OF
THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TODAY.

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHERE THEY WERE GOING IN THE CAR?

A. NO, I DON'T.

Q. TOM, TO GET BACK TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: THE
"IZVESTIYA" ARTICLE SAID, I THINK, THAT AMBASSADOR TOON DID
REQUEST FORMALLY, OFFICIALLY, THAT THE PETERSON CASE NOT
BE PUBLICIZED.

AND YOU DO NOT DENY THAT IS THAT CORRECT?

A. NO, I DO NOT DENY THAT. I DON'T CONFIRM IT EITHER. I
AM NOT IN A POSITION TO SAY ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT IT.

Q. WHY?

A. BECAUSE WE DON'T DISCUSS THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES.

Q. WELL TOM, ON THAT POINT COULD YOU TELL US--YOU ARE NOT CONFIRMING OR DENYING THAT WE HAVE AN UNWRITTEN AGREEMENT EITHER, NOT TO DISCLOSE THESE THINGS?

A. I SAID THAT THERE IS NO PARTICULAR STANDARD PRACTICE ABOUT SUCH STORIES--YOU KNOW, SOME OF THEM APPEAR, SOME OF THEM DON'T.

Q. COULD YOU TELL US, TOM, IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, HOW MANY CASES THERE HAVE BEEN OF OUR CATCHING SOVIET SPIES
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THAT HAVE NOT BEEN DISCLOSED AND HOW MANY CASES THERE HAVE BEEN OF THEIR CATCHING OUR SPIES THAT HAVE NOT BEEN DISCLOSED?

A. NO, I CAN'T.

Q. WHY NOT?

A. I DON'T HAVE THE INFORMATION, AND I AM NOT SURE. AS YOU KNOW, WE REGARD INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES AS BEING VERY SENSITIVE.

Q. WELL I AM JUST WONDERING WHO PROFITS FROM THEM.

A. I CAN'T GIVE YOU A READOUT ON SPY COUNTS.

Q. BUT WHO PROFITS FROM THIS AGREEMENT? I MEAN, ARE WE--IS THE SCORE ABOUT EVEN OR ARE WE BEHIND OR AHEAD?

A. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER WE ARE AHEAD OR BEHIND.

Q. TOM, CAN YOU FILL US IN AS TO WHAT YOU HAVE ON THE PETERSON CASE NOW? I MEAN, WHAT THE STATUS WAS IN MOSCOW WHEN SHE WAS TOLD TO GO--WHAT THE UNITED STATES DID--DID SHE WORK FOR THE CIA AND USE THE EMBASSY AS A COVER?

A. I THINK THAT WE HAVE POSTED AS MUCH INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PARTICULAR MATTER AS WE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO, YESTERDAY, AND I REALLY AM NOT IN A POSITION TO GO INTO IT HERE.

Q. DO YOU DENY THAT SHE WAS A CIA AGENT USING THE EMBASSY AS A COVER?

A. I JUST DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.
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Q. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT HER ROLE WAS IN THE SOVIET UNION?

A. I THINK THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO GO BACK AND LOOK AT THOSE POSTED ANSWERS.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIFIC COMMENT ON THE "IZVESTIYA" ALLEGATIONS AGAINST HER?

A. NO.

Q. THEY STAND, IN OTHER WORDS? YOU LET THEM GO UN-CHALLENGED?

A. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON ALLEGATIONS RELATING TO INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.

Q. TOM, IS THAT THE REWORDED VERSION NOW "ALLEGATIONS?" A MINUTE AGO, YOU SAID YOU HAD NO COMMENT TO MAKE ON INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES AS IF TO CONFIRM IN FACT THIS WAS AN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITY--AND THEREFORE COULDN'T COMMENT ON IT.

NOW WHAT IS YOUR REASON?

A. NO, THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY IMPLICATIONS DRAWN OUT OF WHAT I SAID.

Q. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT MRS. PETERSON WAS SUPPOSED TO BE DOING HERE IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT FROM ALL THIS STUPID TIME YESTERDAY, WHEN SHE WENT ON LEAVE AND COULDN'T ANSWER THE PHONE?

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A. NO, I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THAT.

Q. WELL, SHE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, WASN'T SHE? SHE HAD A STATE DEPARTMENT NUMBER.

A. I REALLY DON'T KNOW. IT'S MY INFORMATION SHE WAS RE-ASSIGNED TO WASHINGTON. BUT YOU KNOW I AM JUST IN THE DARK.

Q. WHEN DID SHE GO ON LEAVE, TOM?

A. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. TOM, WE HAVE IN THE PAST ON SUCH CASES GOTTEN THE FULL

BIOGRAPHY OF THESE PEOPLE. CAN WE GET MISS PETERSON'S?

A. I REALLY DON'T KNOW. LET ME CHECK INTO THAT.

Q. CAN YOU TAKE THE QUESTION, PLEASE, AS TO WHEN SHE WENT
ON LEAVE?

A. I WILL TRY TO FIND OUT, BERNIE, BUT--WELL LET'S SEE
WHAT WE CAN FIND OUT.

CHRISTOPHER

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